1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

845 787 Although the Monguors like to have large families, they have a divided attitude on the birth of twins. If the twins are of the same sex, it is a good omen, but twins of different sex are a very bad omen, foretelling the impoverishment of the family, the ending of good fortune, and the sterility of the mother.[24a] According to Shirokogoroff, both the Manchus and the Tungus consider twins dangerous. They are afraid of a woman who has had twins and will not have sexual relations with her. Although they believe that twins are so closely connected that if one dies the other must die, too, they bury them separately. The Tungus believe that twins have only one soul, and when a woman has had twins no one will borrow, buy, or accept a gift from either her or her husband, for fear of also having twins.[25]

844 Since a Monguor girl is usually married at about the age of eighteen, she usually has her first child at the age of nineteen. It is rare for a girl as young as fifteen to have a child. The rule among the Monguors is to build the kitchen in the northeast corner of the courtyard. This is also the corner that is considered most propitious for a newly married couple. A woman who already has as many children as she wants will try to move out of the northeast corner and live in another room. Monguor women bear their children lying in a horizontal position, while Chinese women of the same region give birth in a kneeling position. At the time of childbirth most of the women of the village come to offer their help. There is always one of them who has a special reputation for dexterity, and she is invited specially. The Monguors prefer to have widows assisting at childbirth, because they believe that in the presence of a widow childbirth goes more smoothly and is more painless. If the delivery is difficult and seems to be taking too long, the husband climbs up on the roof and stamps furiously just above the head of the woman in labor. If this is not successful, a shaman is invited to drive away the evil spirits who are impeding the delivery, or a lama is called in to pray. Children born in such circumstances are often promised to a monastery to become lamas. As soon as the child has been born the room is tabu and men are no longer allowed to enter it. Over the entrance to the room the Monguors hang a cypress bough or a ball of wool or, sometimes, in the Chinese manner, a piece of red cotton or a sieve.

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[24a] The second born of twins has precedence over the first born. This belief has important consequences, because if the first born sons of an eldest son are twins, it is the second born of the twins who is entitled to hold, in due course, the office of head of the family. If the first born sons of a T'u-ssu are twins, it is the second who has the right of succession. The explanation given by the Monguors is that the first born twin is the servant of the second, because a man of importance is always accompanied by a servant, who respectfully opens the door for his master.

[25] S. M. Shirokogoroff, *Social organization of the Manchus*, as cited, 114, and *Social organization of the northern Tungus*, as cited, 275.

[p. 100a]